

IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

Raised Bill 1068
Wednesday, February 14th, 2007

Testimony of Mr. Guy Levine
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Good morning, Madam Chair and Distinguished Members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Guy Levine and I am an individual in recovery at Whiting Forensic Division of CVH, in Middletown. Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony on Raised Bill 1068.

This epistle records my objection to the proposed new Legislation pertaining to our CONNECTICUT PATIENT BILL OF RIGHTS, Gen. Stat., § 17a-548, limiting the property rights of individuals with psychiatric disabilities in recovery. As, I understand the DMHAS proposal will severely limit the amount and extent of our personal property and it will constitute a deprivation of the "right" to hold our own property. In other words, I would no longer have a "statutory right" to property. My property would be controlled by the Division Director.

I am opposing the proposed legislation by DMHAS because: ***Firstly***, Whiting is a Psychiatric Hospital, [not] a Prison. All methods and measures should be kept and enacted which allows us to retain, keep, and express our personal dignity and individuality. Putting us in state clothing would dehumanize us and make us feel that we were all alike. Sending the message we are the property of the State, inducing feelings that would mitigate against our treatment and recovery. We are not sardines in a can, but individuals, real people who have feelings, can love, can care, feel hurt, and express ourselves; ***Secondly***, I along with many other individuals in recovery are devoutly religious individuals. I perceive my religious development, in harmony with and complementing my psychiatric recovery. I am currently under the tutelage of three ordained and professional Rabbis. My spiritual learning and development enhances my growth in a way that psychiatric treatment working alone just could not accomplish. Not that my psychiatric treatment here is not foundational and primary, but rather that I need the spiritual and character improvement provided by my religion as well, if I am to recover fully; ***Thirdly***, with the spiritual counseling provided by my three Rabbis. I also depend to a large extent upon religious books to aid my religious quest. I possess a rather ample library of religious books. These cover the whole gamut of devotional manuals, prayer books, Bibles, ethical treatise's, religious educational manuals, religious biographies, and etc. The proposed new property restrictions would deprive me of most, if not all, of my religious books. This would severely hamper my religious and character development. I have a constitutional right to my property and to practice my religion, which supercedes the Division Director. I also take two long distance correspondence writing courses, in the hope of supporting myself as a writer upon my recovery. These generate more needed books, papers, and pamphlets.

For all the above stated reasons, I am opposing the proposed Raised Bill 1068 and kindly asking that you continue to protect the "RIGHTS" of individuals with psychiatric disabilities as codified in the Connecticut Patient Bill of Rights. Thank you for the opportunity to submit my epistle.

I remain, Guy Levine.